19: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1922 AP1 Burma
Karen AP7

dish tinge. Infants are often almost as white as European children. Red cheeks are not infrequently found in the Toungoo hills.[2]

Though we often find considerable individuality in the facial features of the Karen, they conform more or less to type, which consists of the broad flat face of the Mongolian races with high cheek-bones and widely set eyes. The eyes have narrow palpebral openings, sometimes slanted, and the characteristic fold at the nasal end. The nose is broad and flat without much of a bridge. The plane of the nostrils is tilted upward, so that the septum and nostrils are quite noticeable. The mouth is usually well shaped, but a few individuals have thick lips and a heavy negroid mouth. The teeth are quite regular and, when not stained with betel, are white and shining.

In the Pegu Hills, in the village of Ngepe, I found a family that had decidedly negroid features. (See cuts on p. 17.) The contrast with the rest of the villagers was marked. Although I could get no hint of a different ancestry in the case of the exceptional family from that of the rest of the people, it was obvious that an admixture of Negrito blood must have taken place somewhere.

The hair of the Karen is generally black, straight, and coarse. Once in a while wavy hair is found, and in rare cases it seems to be almost as kinky as that of the African. Wavy hair is not admired, but, on the contrary, is much disliked. The Karen have an abundance of hair on the scalp. It often reaches to the waist, and I have noticed a few instances in which it reached to the ground. In the early days the custom was for both sexes to wear the hair long, but now the men usually wear theirs short.

The men have scant beards which are seldom allowed to grow, being pulled out with tweezers. The mustache is prized and is coaxed to become as luxuriant as possible. In the few cases where the beard is allowed to grow, it resembles the beards of Chinese men. However, I know a Karen teacher in Bassein who has a beard that would please any inhabitant of Russia. A mole with a few hairs growing from it is greatly treasured, the hairs being allowed to grow as long as they will. Hair on the body and chest of the

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[2] According to Broca's plates for classifying the color of the skin I found, in examining about ninety persons, that twenty-five matched No. 30 of his series; nineteen, No. 25; fifteen, No. 44; eight, No. 26; five each, Nos. 29 and 45; three each, Nos. 34 and 31; two, No. 21, and one each, Nos. 37, 40, 47, and 53. The lightest color found was No. 34. One of the fair ones was an infant, and the other two were men, namely, a clerk and a hill boy. The darkest complexion corresponded to No. 37, of which I found but one. No. 29, which was the color of five of the subjects examined, is a much redder hue than No. 37. All determinations of color were made on unexposed parts of the body where the skin had not been tanned by sunlight.

19: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1922 AP1 Burma
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men is rare. I can recall only one man who had a hairy chest. There is nothing unusual about the eyebrows.

The Karen seem to be susceptible to all the diseases prevalent in the country. Children are seen more often than not with distended bowels, due to worms. Enlarged spleen is the rule in the hills, where malaria is so prevalent. A number of cases in which a low vitality has caused ulcers to break out and involve the entire system have come under my notice. Epidemics of measles are much feared, due to complications induced by bathing soon after the rash has disappeared, the bathing being thought necessary. Smallpox does not cause much apprehension. The bubonic plague has never claimed many Karen victims, but the influenza was terribly fatal during the cool season of 1918-19. Tuberculosis is one of the many diseases from the West that is claiming its victims among the Karen people. Though their open-air life safeguards them somewhat, their fear of demons causes them to cover their heads at night, and they breathe only through their blankets. Those who live in the better built houses on the plains also deprive themselves of fresh air by retiring into the close inner room of their homes in order to avoid the smell of cooking, which they fear. Such superstitious practices furnish ideal breeding-places for germs. The unbalanced diet of the Karen also restricts their disease-resisting powers. One hopes that, with improved ideas on sanitation and hygiene, the people of this race will not only be relieved from the present high rate of infant mortality, but also that those surviving may attain greater longevity.

The presence of certain birth-marks on the children of Mongolian parents has been thought by some scientists to be an important criterion for distinguishing members of that race.[1] The Karen infants certainly have these blue patches on the back and buttocks. Sometimes they are so indistinct as to be hardly noticeable, and again they are clear and bright. They are irregular in shape and size. My observations confirm the accuracy of the census returns, namely, that about seven out of ten children have these marks at birth. They usually disappear by the time a child is a year old. The Karen explanation for them is that they are the stains of leaves, on which the spirits of the children sat or laid down to rest in the course of their long and wearisome journey from their former abode. These marks are thought to show that the children having

[1] *The Indian Imperial Census*, 1911, Burma, Pt. I, 281-286.

19; Marshall M-6 (ca. 1910) 1922 AP1 Burma
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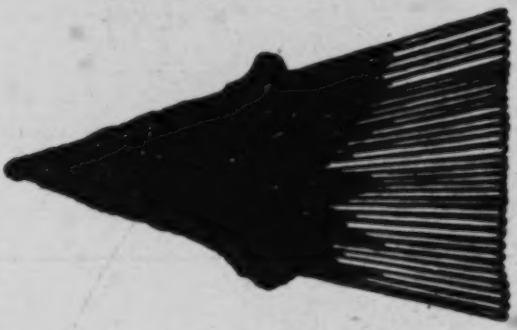
at the bottom. The Red Karen, who take their name from their red garments, wear short breeches of red cotton and a short close-fitting tunic of the same color. These soon become the color of dirt from the generous accretions of that substance which adhere to them. These people use a blanket, which is red and white striped when new. They discard both the tunic and blanket in warm weather. Cotton is the most common material used, but in Toungoo silk is often used, either alone or with the cotton.

In Lower Burma, on the plains, it has become customary for the men to wear Burmese garments. The only time they put on their Karen garments, if they have them, is when they hold their "Bgha" feast. The different tribes to the east wear the Shan costume, with more or less variation, all the way to the Chinese Border.

The Karen men knot up their long hair on the top of the head or over the right or left ear, according to the custom of their particular locality, fastening it with a small triangular bamboo comb. No other head-dress is worn, except a piece of white muslin or other light-weight cloth, which may be put over the head as a turban or around it like a fillet, unless one should include the ornamental head-bands of the Karenni youth who, before marriage, wear necklaces of stones that have been handed down from father to son for generations, and ornaments for the head, neck, and ears, consisting of mother-of-pearl buttons interspersed with the shining wings of beautiful green beetles. All these are, however, given up at marriage and become the property of the bride.



A Karen Bamboo Comb

19: Marshall M-S (ca. 1910) 1922 AP1 Burma
Karen AP7

served their tabus they prospered, but when they neglected them they suffered adversity, it is alleged.

Marriage of a Karen with a person of another race was formerly strictly forbidden. This exclusiveness kept the racial stock pure and unmixed. In recent times the prohibition has not been rigorously enforced. Hence, the barriers between the Karen on the one hand and the Burmese and Shan on the other have been somewhat weakened, betokening—it must be confessed—a moral looseness that was unknown before. The village elders have always maintained that marriages outside of the tribe ("taw leu hko") were not good, although such unions have not been lately tabued. Marriages between members of the same tribe or of the same village, providing the parties concerned are not more closely related than cousins, are permitted. To marry a relative closer than a cousin would be incest, and all the tribes forbid such unions. On the day of a wedding in a village the inhabitants are forbidden to labor.

Adultery and fornication are under strict tabu, except in the Red Karen tribe,[2] the belief among the other tribes being that these sins are offensive to the "Bgha" [3] and destroy the productiveness of the fields, the "Lords of the earth" withholding their favor from the crops when they find that such deeds have been committed. In making their annual feast to these deities, the Bwe tribe formerly required those who had been guilty of uncleanness during the year to confess their sins and did not permit them to come near the sacrificial altars.

A number of prohibitions are connected with birth. One of the Sgaw precepts forbids pregnant women to eat the flesh of the curious monkey-tiger *(Ictides ater)*, bitter herbs, and the long smooth pod called alligator's tongue. Before the men adopted the modern fashion of wearing their hair short, the husband of a woman who was with child was not permitted to trim his locks, for fear of shortening the life of his expected offspring. During the first six days following a birth the custom of the Paduang denies to the father the right of associating or even speaking with any one, except his own family. He alone cares for the mother and child during the period named.[4] The purpose of thus secluding the father is to prevent the transmission of the danger and weakness

[2] See Dr. Mason's account in the *Journal, Asiatic Society of Bengal*, 1866.

[3] This is true in those localities where the "Bgha" are regarded as the family penates. In other localities, as among the Bwe, the offended powers were the "lords of the earth."

[4] Lieutenant E. W. Carrick, *Report on Bwe Expedition*, 1894-95, p. 23.

[5] E. B. Cross, J. A. O. S. (1854) Vol. IV, 293, ff. and D. C. Gilmore, Journ. Burma